



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2007**

**Grade 8
Reading**

Reading

Use the definitions below to answer the question.

order (or' der) *n.* 1. peaceful situation
2. a sequence 3. a command 4. that which
is supplied, bought, or sold

- 1 The streets returned to order after the looting.

Which is the **best** definition of the word order as it is used in this sentence?

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

- 2 A synonym for the word retain is

- A. reply.
- B. close.
- C. keep.
- D. scold.

This Korean folktale tells the story of a special thief. Read the folktale and then answer the questions that follow.

THE CLEVER THIEF

(Korean folktale)

IN KOREA, MANY YEARS ago, there once lived an old thief who was known throughout the country as a very clever person—far too clever to be captured. However, one morning he was so careless and overconfident that he was caught stealing some spices from a shopkeeper. With great satisfaction the police brought the thief before an extremely severe judge who fined the old man very heavily. Unable to pay the sum, the thief had to submit instead to a very lengthy jail sentence. When he arrived at the prison he examined with great thoroughness his cell and the building itself, looking for a means of escape. Finding none, he soon gave up the idea of escape and instead decided upon another way of getting out of jail. Early one morning he called for the jailkeeper.

2 “Yes,” the keeper inquired gruffly, “what do you want?”

3 “Take me before the king,” demanded the thief.

4 “The king!” The jailkeeper threw back his head and gasped with laughter. “Why should the king see *you*?”

5 The thief ignored the jailkeeper’s scorn.

“Tell him I have a gift for him—of extraordinary value.”

The jailkeeper, impressed with the old man’s seriousness, finally agreed to arrange the interview.

The next afternoon the thief was taken to the royal quarters. There the king sat upon an enormous throne, looking very impressive and stern.

“Well, well, what is it? What do you have for me?” asked the king. “I don’t have all day to spend on the likes of you, you know.”

Before replying, the thief noted that the prime minister, the secretary of state, the general of the army, and the head jailkeeper were also present.

“Your Majesty,” said the thief, “I have come here to present you with a rare and valuable gift.”

Slipping his hand into his pocket, he carefully withdrew a tiny box, elegantly wrapped in gold paper with silver ribbons.

The king took the package and swiftly opened it. Examining the contents, his face suddenly flushed red with rage and his voice filled the room with a series of royal bellows.

“What is the meaning of this? How dare you bring me an ordinary plum pit!”

“True,” admitted the old thief quietly, “it is a plum pit.” Here he paused for emphasis. “But by no means an ordinary one.”

17 “What do you mean by that?” stormed the king.

“He who plants this pit,” stated the old man, “will reap nothing but golden plums.”

A moment of astonished silence greeted this news.

Finally the king said, “Well, if that’s the case, why haven’t you planted it yourself?”

“For a very good reason, Your Majesty,” answered the thief. “Only people who have never stolen or cheated can reap the benefit. Otherwise, the tree will bear only ordinary plums. That is why,” and the old thief smiled in his most winning way, “I have brought the pit to you. Certainly, Your Majesty has never stolen anything or cheated.”

“Alas,” declared the king with great regret in his voice—for he was an honest man no matter what other faults he had—“I am afraid I am not the right person.”

“What do you mean?” cried the others present.

But the king remained silent, remembering how he had once stolen some pennies from his mother’s purse when he was a little boy.

“Well, how about the prime minister?” suggested the thief. “Perhaps he—”

But the old thief got no further with his sentence.

“Impossible!” blustered the prime minister with a very red face. He had often accepted bribes from people who wanted fine positions in the government. Surely, the pit would never work for him.

“You then, General?” asked the thief, turning to the head of the army.

“No, no,” muttered the general with lowered eyes. He had become an enormously rich man by cheating his soldiers of part of their pay.

“Well then, Mr. Secretary of State?” offered the thief.

“I’m afraid not,” sputtered the honorable old man, whose conscience was obviously troubling him. Like the prime minister, he had at times accepted money in return for favors.

“Then the head jailkeeper must be our man,” said the thief solemnly as he turned to the last candidate.

Silently the jailkeeper shook his head and shrugged his shoulders. “I’m afraid I’m not right either,” he said at last. He was remembering how he was always treating new prisoners, sending those who gave him money to the best quarters and reserving the worst cells for the poor and unfortunate.

Refusing to give up, the thief suggested several other officials. Each of the fine gentlemen, however, rejected in his turn the offer of the plum pit that would bear him golden fruit forever.

When the room was entirely still, each official trying to hide his embarrassment, the old thief suddenly burst out laughing.

35 “You gentlemen,” he exclaimed, “you embezzle and you steal, and yet you never end up in jail!” He searched their faces earnestly, and then in a quiet voice, he added, “I have done nothing more than steal some spices, and for this I have been condemned to serve five years in jail.”

For quite some time the king and his officials remained silent with shame.

At last the king stirred.

“I would suggest,” he said in a low voice, looking at each of his ministers one by one, “that we all contribute to this man’s fine, so that he will not go back to jail.”

Immediately the necessary money was gathered and placed at the monarch’s feet. Calling the old thief to him, the king gave him the money.

“Go, my good man,” he said. “You are free. You have spent enough time in prison. From your experience you have instructed us wisely. Ministers and kings sometimes forget themselves. We will remember your lesson well.”

And so, with nothing more than a plum pit to help him, the very clever old thief left jail a free man.

3 In paragraph 2, the word gruffly means

- A. simply.
- B. seriously.
- C. lazily.
- D. roughly.

4 In paragraphs 2 through 5, what is the jailkeeper's attitude toward the thief?

- A. disrespectful
- B. regretful
- C. concerned
- D. panicked

5 In paragraph 17, the word reap means to

- A. obtain.
- B. buy.
- C. build.
- D. present.

6 According to the thief, the plum pit will yield golden plums only if

- A. the plum is old and rotten.
- B. the thief is still in jail.
- C. the planter is honest.
- D. the owner likes plums.

7 Describe how the king changes during this folktale. Use details from the folktale to support your answer.

- 8 What stops all of the officials from taking the plum pit?
- A. They decide planting it is too much work.
 - B. They have guilty consciences.
 - C. They want to see golden plums.
 - D. They hope someone else will take it.

- 9 In paragraph 35, what was the thief **most likely** looking for when “he searched their faces earnestly”?
- A. shame
 - B. pride
 - C. power
 - D. greed

- 10 The **most likely** reason the king and other officials pay the thief’s fine is because they are
- A. wealthy.
 - B. ashamed.
 - C. grateful.
 - D. suspicious.

- 11 What will the jailkeeper in this folktale **most likely** do next?
- A. ask permission to plant the plum pit
 - B. confess his misconduct to the king
 - C. treat his prisoners more fairly
 - D. try to put the thief back in jail

- 12 Explain how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself from jail. Use information from the folktale to support your answer.

Acknowledgments

The New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island Departments of Education wish to acknowledge and credit the following authors and publishers for use of their work in the reading portion of the *New England Common Assessment Program*—2007.

“The Clever Thief” (pp. 2–3) from *Folk and Fairy Tales of Far-off Lands* edited by Eric and Nancy Protter. Copyright © 1965 by Eric Protter. Published by Meredith Press.

Grade 8 Reading Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Content Strand ¹	WV	WV	WV	LA	WV	LI	LA	LI	LA	LA	LA	LI
GLE Code	7-2	7-3	7-2	7-5	7-2	7-4	7-5	7-4	7-5	7-5	7-5	7-4
Depth of Knowledge Code	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Item Type ²	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR
Answer Key	A	C	D	A	A	C		B	A	B	C	
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4

¹Content Strand: WV = Word ID/Vocabulary, LI = Literary/Initial Understanding, LA = Literary/Analysis & Interpretation,
II = Informational/Initial Understanding, IA = Informational/Analysis & Interpretation

²Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
Support Materials
2007**

**Grade 8
Reading**

**NECAP 2007 RELEASED ITEMS
GRADE 8 READING**

7.2.1 Students identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary by using strategies to unlock meaning (e.g., knowledge of word structure, including prefixes/suffixes, base words, common roots, or word origins; or context clues; or other resources, such as dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses; or prior knowledge)

Use the definitions below to answer the question.

order (*or' der*) *n.* **1.** peaceful situation
2. a sequence **3.** a command **4.** that which
is supplied, bought, or sold

- 1** The streets returned to order after the looting.

Which is the **best** definition of the word order as it is used in this sentence?

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

7.3.1 Shows breadth of vocabulary knowledge through demonstrating understanding of word meanings and relationships by identifying synonyms, antonyms, homonyms/homophones, or shades of meaning

- 2** A synonym for the word retain is

- A. reply.
- B. close.
- C. keep.
- D. scold.

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.2.1 Students identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary by using strategies to unlock meaning (e.g., knowledge of word structure, including prefixes/suffixes, base words, common roots, or word origins; or context clues; or other resources, such as dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses; or prior knowledge)

- 3 In paragraph 2, the word gruffly means
- A. simply.
 - B. seriously.
 - C. lazily.
 - D. roughly.

7.5.2 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by describing characters' traits, motivation, or interactions, citing thoughts, words, or actions that reveal characters' traits, motivations, or their changes over time

- 4 In paragraphs 2 through 5, what is the jailkeeper's attitude toward the thief?
- A. disrespectful
 - B. regretful
 - C. concerned
 - D. panicked

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.2.1 Students identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary by using strategies to unlock meaning (e.g., knowledge of word structure, including prefixes/suffixes, base words, common roots, or word origins; or context clues; or other resources, such as dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses; or prior knowledge)

- 5 In paragraph 17, the word reap means to
- A. obtain.
 - B. buy.
 - C. build.
 - D. present.

7.4.2 Demonstrate initial understanding of elements of literary texts by paraphrasing or summarizing key ideas/plot, with major events sequenced, as appropriate to text

- 6 According to the thief, the plum pit will yield golden plums only if
- A. the plum is old and rotten.
 - B. the thief is still in jail.
 - C. the planter is honest.
 - D. the owner likes plums.

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.5.2 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by describing characters' traits, motivation, or interactions, citing thoughts, words, or actions that reveal characters' traits, motivations, or their changes over time

- 7** Describe how the king changes during this folktale. Use details from the folktale to support your answer.

Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	Response provides a thorough description of the way the king changes during this folktale. Response includes relevant details from the folktale.
3	Response provides a description of the way the king changes during this folktale. Response includes some relevant details from the folktale.
2	Response provides a partial description of how the king changes during this folktale. Response uses limited details from the folktale.
1	Response is vague or minimal.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

Training Notes:

The student should use details and description from the folktale to describe how the king changes over time. The response may include:

- At first, the king is curious but in a hurry.
- The king becomes enraged at the sight of the plum pit.
- The king becomes silent at the news about the golden plum.
- The king becomes regretful for his one little act of stealing.
- The king admits his misdeeds.
- The king is humbled by the experience; he suggests they all pay the clever thief's fine.
- At the end of the folktale, the king has learned a lesson and will remember it well.

7

The King changes during the course of the folktale. When we first meet him, he is very "impressive and stern." Later he is angry because the thief has brought him a plum pit. After the thief announces that it is no ordinary plum pit, the king is curious, and says, "What do you mean by that?" Upon learning that the pit will produce golden plums once planted, the king is suspicious. "Well, if that's the case, why haven't you planted it yourself?" he asks.

The thief reveals that only people who have never stolen or cheated may reap the benefit. The king is regretful, but also honest, because he stole pennies from his mother's purse as a boy. The thief offered the pit to everyone else in the room, but no one accepted. The thief berates them for stealing and not being punished. As a final change, the king is shameful and offers to pay the thief's fine.

Response provides a thorough description of the way the king changes in this folktale. Response includes relevant details from the folktale.

SCORE POINT 3

7

In the tale that the thief presents upon the king changes the king in several ways. One way that he changed was that at first the king was mad of seeing what was inside of the box. Then as the thief went on the king got a little happy because he heard about the golden purns. After that he felt ashamed because he knew that he has done some bad things as well in his life like others have too. Then because of that the king felt embarrassed because of what he's done and let go the thief.

Response provides a description of the way the king changes in this folktale. Response includes some relevant details from the folktale.

NECAP 2007 RELEASED ITEMS
GRADE 8 READING

SCORE POINT 2

7

The king changes because the thief says that only someone who hadn't stolen or cheated could get the golden plum tree. The king did not get the tree because he had stolen in his past. The king and the other people in the room felt bad that they stolen or cheated so they let the thief go free.

Response provides a partial description of how the king changes in this folktale. Response uses limited details from the folktale.

NECAP 2007 RELEASED ITEMS
GRADE 8 READING

SCORE POINT 1

7

The king changes from being angry to being nice and letting the thief out of jail.

Response is vague or minimal.

SCORE POINT 0

7

The king gets older during the folktale.

Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.4.2 Demonstrate initial understanding of elements of literary texts by paraphrasing or summarizing key ideas/plot, with major events sequenced, as appropriate to text

- 8 What stops all of the officials from taking the plum pit?
- A. They decide planting it is too much work.
 - B. They have guilty consciences.
 - C. They want to see golden plums.
 - D. They hope someone else will take it.

7.5.2 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by describing characters' traits, motivation, or interactions, citing thoughts, words, or actions that reveal characters' traits, motivations, or their changes over time

- 9 In paragraph 35, what was the thief **most likely** looking for when "he searched their faces earnestly"?
- A. shame
 - B. pride
 - C. power
 - D. greed

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.5.3 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by making inferences about cause/effect (e.g., explaining how an event gives rise to the next), internal or external conflicts (e.g., person versus self, person versus person, person versus nature/society/fate), or the relationship among elements within text

- 10 The **most likely** reason the king and other officials pay the thief's fine is because they are
- A. wealthy.
 - B. ashamed.
 - C. grateful.
 - D. suspicious.

7.5.1 Analyze and interpret elements of literary texts, citing evidence where appropriate by explaining or supporting logical predictions

- 11 What will the jailkeeper in this folktale **most likely** do next?
- A. ask permission to plant the plum pit
 - B. confess his misconduct to the king
 - C. treat his prisoners more fairly
 - D. try to put the thief back in jail

THE CLEVER THIEF

Literary Text

7.4.2 Demonstrate initial understanding of elements of literary texts by paraphrasing or summarizing key ideas/plot, with major events sequenced, as appropriate to text

- 12** Explain how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself from jail. Use information from the folktale to support your answer.

Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	Response provides a thorough explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response includes relevant information from the folktale.
3	Response provides an explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response includes some relevant information from the folktale.
2	Response provides a partial explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response uses limited information from the folktale.
1	Response is vague or minimal.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

Training Notes:

- The thief makes up the story about the plum pit growing a tree with golden plums if planted by an honest person.
- The thief used the plum pit to outsmart the king and officials.
- The thief used the plum pit to show that everyone needs to be careful of judging others—because everyone's actions and motives can be judged.
- The thief used the plum pit to show that people should learn from their mistakes—lessons learned.

12

In the story, the clever thief comes up with a way to get out of jail without escaping. The thief takes a plum pit to the King as a gift, telling him that only those who have not stolen or cheated can have the magic of the golden plums. When the King turns down the gift after realizing that he has stolen something before, the thief turns to the other people present in the room. Alas, all the members of the room have stolen before. The thief laughs at this, wondering why he was jailed for stealing some spices when the other men had also stolen and were still free men. The King realized how this was unfair to the thief, so in hopes of somehow making it up to him, he sets the thief free. The thief of course knew this was going to happen the whole time, which is what made him so clever.

Response provides a thorough explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response includes relevant information from the folktale.

12

The thief says that the plum pit is magical and if the has not cheated or stole something it will grow golden plums, but if you have cheated or stole something then the tree will only grow regular plums and not golden plums. When the thief tells the royalty's they all turn the plum pit down because they have done something wrong and they know that they cannot accept the plum pit because they have either cheated or stole something in thier past lifetime and if they accept the plum pit it would be wrong for them to accept it because of what they had done earlier in life.

Response provides an explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response includes some relevant information from the folktale.

12

How the thief uses the plum theory was he said they grew golden plums. Then he said the planter has to be honest. Once everyone is saying they lied, he says I've only stole spices and have 5 years for it. They were worse than them and they never went to jail. So they let him go because they decided that it was right to do.

Response provides a partial explanation of how the thief uses the plum pit to free himself. Response uses limited information from the folktale.

NECAP 2007 RELEASED ITEMS
GRADE 8 READING

SCORE POINT 1

12

He used the plam pit to get them to confes their crimes and set him free.

Response is vague or minimal.

SCORE POINT 0

12

The thief uses the plumb tree to help him in jail by growing right outside of the window so it grows and he can climb down it.

Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.